

Remarks by the Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
Treasure Island
San Francisco, CA
Monday, 16 August, 2010

What a great day, and what a great introduction! I'm coming back and next time, Lincecum is going to win. I'm so happy to be here today with this group of people up here and out here. The culmination of almost two decades of very, very hard work has come to pass today, as the Navy officially transfers Treasure Island to the city and the people of San Francisco.

We owe an absolute heartfelt thanks to the people who have worked so hard to achieve this goal. Two of the people who have worked the hardest, and two of the people that it's been my privilege to work closely with are sitting here today: Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Mayor Gavin Newsom. The mayor said some mighty nice things about me, but I'll tell you, this would not have happened without the speaker and the mayor.

I had been Navy Secretary about 10 minutes when the speaker called and said, "Can we do something about Treasure Island?" I went up and talked to her and I talked to the mayor, and it was a group effort, a team effort. And we stood on the work that other people had done, and a couple of those folks are here today: Mayor Willie Brown and my predecessor as Secretary of the Navy, John Dalton, both of whom were here when this process started and both of whom laid the groundwork for what we are able to do here today. So thank you.

The United States Navy's association with Treasure Island began 70 years ago, right after the completion of World Expo '39 and '40. The Navy took this over and from these shores tens of thousands of Sailors and Marines left to fight in the Pacific in World War II. And a lot of those Sailors and Marines who left from here, this was the last time they saw America, and they made the ultimate sacrifice for us.

As we transfer this treasure, this island, from the Navy back to the city, I hope that all of us will remember the service and sacrifice of every Sailor, every Marine, living and dead. The people who left from here and the people who serve today, risking everything, so that we can celebrate today. That legacy lives on in the young men and women who wear the cloth of this country and who are deployed around the world as we meet here today.

When the famous, or infamous, Base Realignment and Closure process started in 1988, the final result of any individual base closure and transfer could not have hoped for a better ultimate outcome than what's been achieved with Treasure Island. The Navy's charge in the BRAC process is to dispose of property in a manner that promotes economic development. That has been done.

The transfer of Treasure Island is a win for San Francisco; it is a win for the state of California; a win for the United States Navy; and a win for the American taxpayers, who paid for this base and all the infrastructure that was here. Because of this transfer, the American taxpayer gets fair market value of Treasure Island. Because of this transfer, hundreds of millions of dollars in economic development will flow into the City of San Francisco and into this whole area. And because of this transfer, Treasure Island will bring thousands of great jobs right here, first as new buildings are built, and then as this island, more and more, and this new development, becomes an ongoing and integral part of the City of San Francisco. For our part, as the mayor said, the Navy is going to get significant rewards by sharing in the revenues generated by this island – revenues which can, in turn, be used to make sure that our Sailors and Marines have the tools that they need to do the mission that they are being sent on.

I am incredibly grateful to two fine public servants, Mayor Newsom and his staff, Speaker Pelosi and hers, and the entire California congressional delegation, for their commitment to resolving this transfer. Speaker Pelosi has been working on this issue since her very early years in Congress. And over the years, even though negotiations have sometimes been difficult, the speaker has always had the best interest of the city, of the state, of the Navy and of the nation at heart.

What we have achieved here can serve as a template for future transfers of military bases around the country. I'm also very grateful to the speaker for her leadership on energy and on energy legislation, and for her commitment, along with the president, to change in the way we use and produce energy in the United States, and building toward a new energy economy.

It's of tremendous importance, the way we produce energy and the way we use it, to the Navy and Marine Corps, because how we power our ships and our aircraft is fundamentally about national security, just as energy reform for the country at large is about energy independence, national security, as well as about economic development and job creation.

Here on Treasure Island, as the mayor has so eloquently pointed out, there's an opportunity to demonstrate what happens when sustainable development and sustainable energy usage is considered from the very beginning of a project. Here on Treasure Island, there's an opportunity to build a working model of the president's new energy future.

And because of the leadership of the public servants who stand here today, I look forward to seeing that model become an example for the rest of the country to follow. Thank you so much for being with us today. It is my incredible honor and pleasure to introduce to you your native daughter, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi.